



BUSINESS GATEWAY BUSINESS PLAN 2015/16

1. BACKGROUND

Introduced in 2001, Business Gateway (BG) was established by Scottish Enterprise to provide a first point of contact for business support enquiries and as a channel for access to all publicly funded services to businesses including Scottish Enterprise, Local Authorities, the Scottish Government and others.

In 2007, the Scottish Government reviewed the remit of the enterprise networks which resulted in the transfer of responsibility for local economic development, including the Business Gateway service, and regeneration to Local Authorities. As a result, Scottish Borders Council took responsibility for the management of the Business Gateway contract (let to Carnegie Enterprise Ltd) for the period October 2007 to September 2012. Linked to this, the Economic Development team assumed responsibility for ensuring the development of a more responsive, accessible and joined-up business support service in the Scottish Borders.

Following publication of the national evaluation of Business Gateway in May 2011 and a new Service Specification in November 2011, a new framework for delivery of Business Gateway for the period 2012-17 was agreed by the Council in March 2012 and the delivery of Business Gateway service was transferred in-house on 1 October 2012.

Business Gateway is now fully integrated into the Economic Development Department of the Council and provides the majority of business facing activities that are carried out by the department.

2. DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE

2a) Business Vision

In order to address feedback that has been received Business Gateway will carry out a number of actions this year to ensure that the majority of businesses in the Scottish Borders know what the service offers and how to access it. This will ensure that national priority targets are met and that the service continues to deliver business advice and support to an ever increasing audience. These actions will focus on delivery in different parts of the region as well as providing workshops to minority communities and the area's most disadvantaged communities. Business Gateway will continue to work with other departments in the council to ensure consistency of delivery and to enable smoother process of business support functions.

The Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 sets out the Council's and its partners' vision for a prosperous economy in the Scottish Borders. It sets out a strategic approach to the development of the economy – through the development and implementation of infrastructure, support to business, increased employment and the facilitation of external funding and European investment. The Strategy has been produced in the context of challenging local economic conditions and the need to provide new investment, jobs and opportunities for our communities.

The Vision to 2023:

'By 2023 the Scottish Borders will be amongst the best performing and the most productive rural economies in Scotland. By supporting existing businesses and

Business Gateway

Business Plan 2015/16

encouraging higher value economic activity, our quality of life will increase. The Borders will become a location of choice for growing businesses and for people to live and work'.

In April 2013, the Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership (CPP) took a strategic decision to focus public sector efforts on our most deprived communities and target resources to address persistent challenges and socio-economic 'outcome gaps' compared to the rest of Scotland. To achieve this, the CPP Strategic Board (including the Council and Scottish Enterprise) has agreed a joint vision:

“By 2023, quality of life will have improved for those who are currently living within our most deprived communities, through a stronger economy and through targeted partnership action.”

To deliver this vision, the CCP Board has identified 3 strategic priorities:

1. Grow our economy
2. Reduce inequalities
3. Maximise the impact from the low carbon agenda

Point 1 is covered by all the actions carried out in Business Gateway as attention is focused on businesses with the greatest potential for growth. This includes providing individuals with the information they need to make the decision to start their own enterprise, assisting new start businesses to gain the support they need to get established and helping established business to meet their full potential both in turnover and employment opportunities.

Point 2 will be addressed by the delivery of services in the most disadvantaged areas of the Scottish Borders and through working with partners to access minority communities. Specifically Business Gateway will be looking for opportunities to run start up workshops in Burnfoot and Langlee and investigating our ability to run these in languages other than English. The team have started to work with our colleagues in the Council to identify communities not currently accessing the service, with a view to meeting with these groups to better understand how the service can be delivered to them.

Point 3 takes more time as it relies on informing businesses of the benefits and waiting for them to take positive action. This has proved challenging to date and the service will survey businesses to establish the best way to engage on this topic area. The outputs of the survey will be used to direct the team's activities during the forthcoming year building on the current signposting to other support organisations such as the Energy Saving Trust and Resource Efficient Scotland.

2b) Where do we see ourselves going?

2015 will see the reintroduction of a railway to the Scottish Borders; this is the biggest opportunity for the businesses in our region for many years, possibly a generation. Business Gateway is at the forefront of the support for businesses to take advantage of the railway. This year will see many opportunities linked to the railway for those in the immediate vicinity and for the wider region. Business Gateway will continue to promote these opportunities to the region as a whole and to work with individual businesses wanting to take advantage of the railway.

The service will remain flexible and continue to research new opportunities available to the businesses in our region. Through utilising European funding it is possible to continue to provide additional advisers for key sectors and with specialisms in the areas of business that are most needed in our region. These will include HR, Finance, Social Enterprise, e-commerce and ICT to assist with the use and progression of Next Generation Broadband.

Business Gateway

Business Plan 2015/16

Business Gateway will work with more businesses and communities to encourage enterprise. This will involve it in proactively addressing the needs of those communities that find it difficult to access the service in its current format, and where possible the service offering will be adapted to meet their needs. Business Gateway will also seek out new businesses to work with by using a variety of marketing methods and by more regularly taking the service out to the towns across the region. Again through accessing European funding Business Gateway will deliver a series of Masterclasses and networking events to encourage established businesses to start using the service. In addition, the service we will increase the number of workshops delivered from its base in Selkirk to include more current topics such as auto enrolment. This will also support the aim of developing stronger working relationships with potential introducers such as accountants, banks etc.

This year Business Gateway will be adopting a client management approach to working with businesses, with advisers being given a target number of growth potential businesses to work with and develop better relations in order to better understand how Business Gateway, the Council and other partners can support their development and growth. This approach of having a closer working relationship with a number of identified businesses with growth potential will enable the team to meet its national targets as well as contributing to the development of the economy of the region.

The changing economic, political and financial factors affecting businesses in the Scottish Borders means that it is crucial that the Business Gateway service remains flexible and adapts to changes in the external environment, allowing the service to respond to local opportunities and threats, and to continue to meet the needs of local business.

3. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

3a) Local Economic Context - The Scottish Borders Business Base

According to the figures published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) using data from the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) in 2014, there are 4,775 enterprises in the Scottish Borders area.

In terms of employment numbers, almost 90% employ less than 10 people (micro-enterprises) compared to c. 87% in Scotland; c.9% employ between 10 and 49 people (small enterprises), compared to a Scottish profile of 11%, and c.1% employ 50 or more people (medium sized enterprises and above) compared to a Scottish profile of 2%. In other words the Scottish Borders economy is more heavily reliant on “micro” businesses¹ than Scotland as a whole.

Analysis of business turnover and age also provides an insight into the likely trading activities of businesses. Higher levels of turnover suggest that businesses will be trading out with the region, and business age can provide an indication of a business’ potential for growth; as younger businesses tend to grow faster.

In terms of the value of annual business turnover, the comparison between Scottish Borders and Scotland² is as follows:

£ 000's	Scottish Borders	Scotland
0 – 49	20%	17%
50 – 99	22%	23%

¹ Micro businesses are defined as employing less than 10 people

² Please note that there are 156,765 enterprises in Scotland, 4,775 in the Scottish Borders – ONS Inter Departmental Business Register, 2014.

100 - 249	29%	31%
250 - 499	14%	13%
500 - 999	8%	8%
1000 - 4999	5%	7%
5000+	1%	2%

Source: the Office for National Statistics (ONS) IDBR, 2014

In terms of business age the breakdown is as follows:

Age (years)	Scottish Borders	Scotland
> 2	10%	16%
2 – 3	8%	12%
4 – 9	21%	25%
10+	61%	48%

Source: the Office for National Statistics (ONS) IDBR, 2013

In comparison to Scotland, the Scottish Borders tends to have businesses that are smaller in terms of turnover, fewer of scale (annual turnover greater than £1 million), and businesses that are significantly older.

The Scottish Borders does benefit from higher rates of business density and business start-up. 2013 data from the ONS indicates that there are 548 businesses per 10,000 adults in the Scottish Borders, compared to 364 at the Scottish level and, in 2012, 315 Business Start ups out of 17,385 across Scotland. This higher rate of business density is common to rural areas and suggests a competitive and entrepreneurial business environment in the area, but may also be indicative of a reliance on multi-entrepreneurship, for example in the tourism and construction sectors.

Analysis of the sectoral make up of the business base and its employment shows that the Scottish Borders has a higher reliance on primary production, wholesale/retail, health and public sector and manufacturing than the rest of Scotland.

Manufacturing is well represented in the area supporting over 5,000 jobs, around 3% of Scottish manufacturing jobs³. Construction supports just over 2,500 jobs, just over 2% of Scottish construction jobs.

As noted in the Scottish Borders Economic Profile: “The sectoral mix of the local economy is different to Scotland, and represents a significant challenge in shaping our economic future”.⁴

Recognising these challenges, the dynamics of the business base and the objectives set out in the Scottish Borders Economic Strategy will continue to direct the provision of services at Business Gateway. The emphasis for 2015/16 will be to maintain the levels of business start ups, but place greater emphasis and resources on supporting business growth particularly in key sectors.

³ Source: business register and employment survey - NOMIS

⁴ Scottish Borders Economic Profile 2013 (April 2013) page 18

3b) Developing the Business Gateway Service- Ambitions for the Scottish Borders

As noted earlier the Business Gateway service is managed by lead local authorities and offers a “one stop shop” for business support enquiries as well as providing direct support and a conduit to other business support services provided by the Council and its partners, especially Scottish Enterprise.

The service specification for the 2012-17 Business Gateway service was developed nationally, and was approved by the Business Gateway Scotland Board on 21 November 2011. An obligation to deliver to a consistent standard and report in a consistent way is required of all lead local authorities with responsibility for Business Gateway.

Business Gateway offers information, advice and guidance to people who are considering starting a business or growing their existing business. It is a national service with built-in local flexibilities. It is supported by the national Business Gateway Enquiry Service and the Business Gateway website (bgateway.com).

As the Business Gateway service in the Scottish Borders goes forward it will deliver against the core elements of the national service specification (Start Up and Growth Advisory Service), but it will continue to enhance the breadth and depth of the overall Business Gateway service through the development and delivery of Local Services. This provision of local services is aligned to the priorities set out in the Scottish Borders Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and the Scottish Borders Economic Strategy 2023 in order to maximise the impacts from the resources available. Local Services will be developed to better reflect the nature of the local business base and focus on our objectives to encourage increased business growth and to push up the number of businesses entering the business ‘growth pipeline’.

Business Gateway will continue to develop the Local Services offered to businesses. It will make these services innovative and look to lead the way nationally by developing new and effective services. These services will assist the team to achieve its goal of becoming one of the top performing Business Gateways in the country. Working with colleagues in the Business Gateway National Unit and making best use of the European funding available new delivery methods and ways to promote the service will be researched and trialled. The successful projects will be fed back to the national unit to encourage adoption by other regions.

The service will also look to provide advisers for national Business Gateway projects such as appraising EDGE funding applications, which will benefit the Scottish Borders, to ensure that it is recognised as one of the leading Business Gateway regions. The team will also continue to feedback to the national unit on elements of the service that should be adopted or amended to enable other regions to benefit from the experience of the Scottish Borders.

Finally, it should be noted that there has been some initial discussions about undertaking a review of the national service specification. Council staff will be involved in this review and it is anticipated that the review will reflect the direction of travel that has been adopted in the Scottish Borders over the past couple of years; namely providing a high quality universally available service with an emphasis on supporting local businesses with growth potential.

SWOT analysis – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

	Positive	Negative/ detrimental	
	<i>Internal to the Economic Development Team/ Business Gateway (SW)</i>		
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reputation - Skills and expertise in the team - Proven track record in delivery - Strategic influence - Multi disciplined team - Cross-departmental and Council links - Credibility – with customers - EU experience - New Business Gateway Manager bringing increased focus on service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability of staff - Time consuming levels of bureaucracy - Risk aversion - Multi reporting/ systems - Not recognised as a support mechanism by other departments - Expectation for advisers to deliver services not core to BG Targets 	Weaknesses
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shifting and volume of demand - Master class series - Proactive contact with minority and deprived communities - Economic recovery - Local funding provision – grant and loan funds - EU funding – programmes - Integration of business support services - Local added value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shifting and volume of demand - Economic recovery, driving down business starts - EU funding – changes - Public sector deficit and budget reduction 	Threats
	<i>External to the Economic Development Team/ Business Gateway (OT)</i>		

3c) Business Gateway Contract 2012-17 – National Service Requirements

The Business Gateway service in the Scottish Borders offers a “one stop shop” for all business support enquiries including access to all publicly funded services to business. It helps hundreds of businesses every year through a combination of workshops, online advice via the www.bgateway.com website, and through other forms of direct support. The service is delivered by a team of business advisers based at Ettrick Riverside in Selkirk. It uses the Council’s contact centres and other facilities such as community centres across the Scottish Borders as out-reach points to provide clients with a “local” service. In 2015/16 the aim is to formalise this “local” service by piloting adviser attendance on specified dates as well as providing Business Gateway branding and information in the contact centres.

It is expected that the form of business development assistance provided by Business Gateway will remain consistent in the period to March 2016, and is broadly characterised as follows:

Assistance Type	Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and Information 	Advice and information provided directly by Business Gateway Advisers, and via national BG website and other online services at business.scotland.gov.uk website, supplemented via local business gateway web pages and information exchange via social media channels. Access to research and market insight data is provided via the Scottish Enterprise ‘Enquiry Fulfilment Response Service’ (EFRS). Wider linkages, e.g. property advice, provided via the Council’s Economic Development team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External Expertise 	Direct referral by Business Gateway Advisers to expertise via external partner programmes, as well as access to consultants, higher education institutions and other centres of excellence, including accessing skilled individuals seconded or placed in the business and business mentoring programmes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Support 	Assisting client to access finance in the form of grants, loans, loan guarantees or private equity, including grant support via Economic Development service and the soon to be launched national Local Authority Business Loans Scotland. Note: Business Gateway service does not administer funding directly.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking 	Supporting businesses to expand their network via business groups, sector initiatives, business events, workshops and seminars and referrals to appropriate routes – Chamber, FSB, etc. BG workshops encourage business to engage with each other as well as the adviser during the ½ day or full day workshop. The introduction in 2015 of the new Masterclass series providing information and advice on key topics as well as networking opportunities, led by the Business Gateway team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills 	The upgrading of skills and competencies within the businesses via training delivered, sourced or referred. Help to identify skills support from other partners such as Skills Development Scotland.

Business Gateway

Business Plan 2015/16

Some of these inputs can be directly linked to each other. For instance, the provision of grants may encourage the use of external expertise (e.g. web development), or networking events that include an element of management development training.

Business Gateway Service Specification 2012-17 – National Specification

Following a national evaluation in 2011 and feedback from stakeholders and businesses at a national level the Business Gateway service now comprises the following elements:

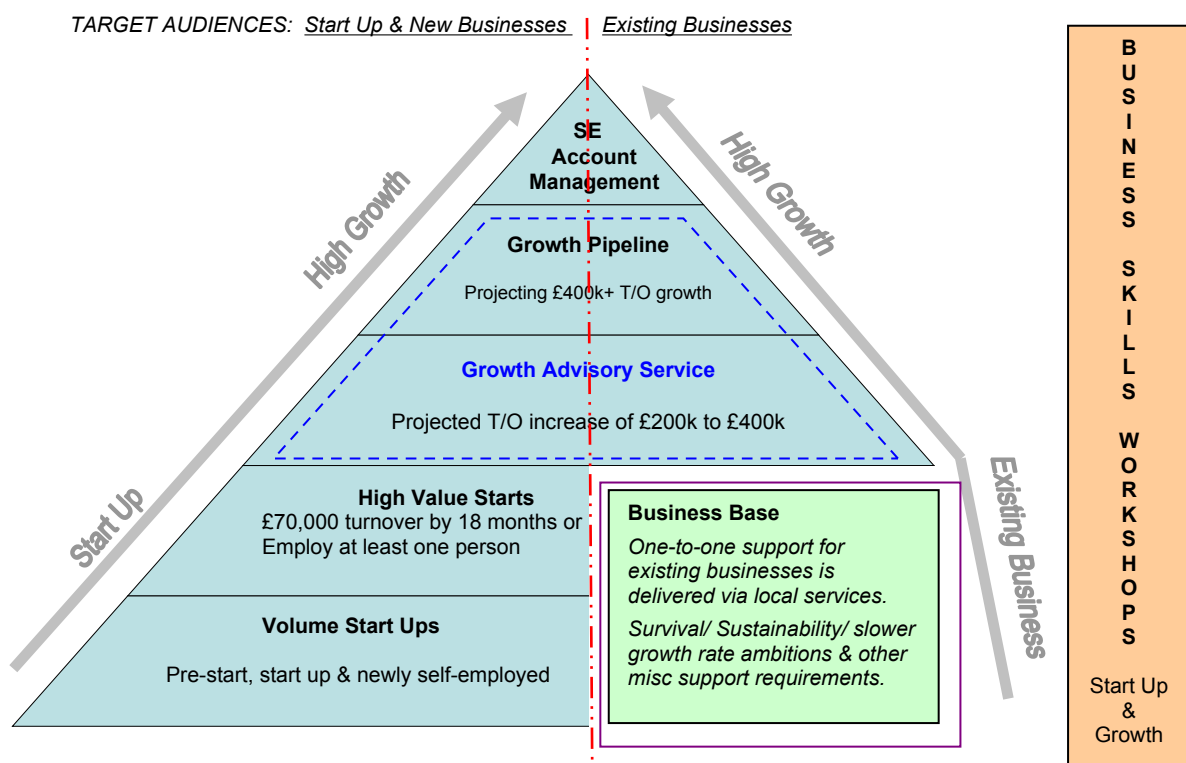
1. **Start up Advisory Service**
2. **Growth Advisory Service**
3. **Business Gateway Local Services**

In delivering these services, the Business Gateway service also supports:

- Delivery of local marketing activities
- Participation in local and national promotional and networking events
- Advisory input to future online and other services
- Provision of a link between Business Gateway national and local services with other business facing Local Authority services.

Market Segmentation: targeting business support

The national Business Gateway service specification operates within the following segmentation model of businesses in Scotland.



4. HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET THERE?

4a) Business Gateway Service Delivery Areas 2015/16

1. Start-Up Advisory Service (Volume and Value Added Starts):

The Business Gateway Start-Up Advisory Service provides both pre-start and start-up/ early stage support. The principle activities are the provision of training workshops and advisory services. The volume start up service will be delivered by one full time member of staff; the role will be to deliver workshops and other 1 to many support services. The adviser will continue to work closely with the Further and Higher Education Institutions in the Scottish Borders and will be instrumental in our outreach services – both in geography and minority communities. For start-up businesses not expected to employ staff or meet the turnover level outlined above, support will be predominantly through the Business Gateway website, the Business Gateway Enquiry Service and locally delivered workshops.

The advisory services (one-to-one support) focus on higher value start up businesses which are capable, with the support from Business Gateway, of employing staff and/ or achieving turnover levels of over £70,000 within 18 months of starting to trade. For the first six months of 2015/16 Business Gateway will utilise EU funds to appoint an adviser (0.6 fte) to focus on this segment of businesses. This will allow a stronger focus on business start-ups with the ability to grow turnover and employ staff. This adviser will provide the time and expertise to assist these businesses in taking full advantage of the opportunities open to them. The goal will be drive these businesses on to the next level of segmentation i.e. Local Growth Advisory Service.

Business Gateway will continue to work closely with other government departments e.g. Job Centre Plus and Skills Development Scotland, and programmes to ensure it offers opportunities for assistance to those not currently in work or further education.

The team will also work closely with Council colleagues following the Wood Commission report to ensure that self-employment and enterprise is considered a real alternative to employment. This work will include working closely with Young Enterprise Scotland and supporting its proposed development work with secondary schools in the Scottish Borders.

2. Growth Advisory Services

At the national level the Growth Advisory Service aims to work with established businesses with the greatest potential to increase turnover and numbers employed in the business. Specifically this means increasing annual turnover by a minimum of £200,000 within a 3 year period. Those with the potential to increase the turnover by £400,000 are considered for further support by Scottish Enterprise while still working with a local Business Gateway adviser.

The support will be further enhanced by the introduction of a Client Management approach within the Business Gateway service in the Scottish Borders during 2015/16. This approach will allow a named adviser, to act as the main point of contact for the client, as well as a set number of days to work with individual businesses to help them achieve their goals. In addition to the expertise each Client Manager will bring to the role they will be able to access specialist advice from both colleagues and external consultants (funded by EU monies). Advisers will also be expected to attend workshops and the Masterclass series to increase their knowledge and networks.

These businesses will be the focus of our internal funding opportunities both from grant and the new national loan scheme and the Railway Investment Fund. The client manager will be responsible for identifying the funding needs of these businesses and ensuring that they are

well placed to apply for and get these funds. Business Gateway does not have access to direct funding other than through Expert Help and focusses on facilitating funding applications.

Business Gateway will continue to provide specialist advisers in the subjects most required by businesses using European funding to support this provision. Business Gateway will also allocate time to advisers to focus on our key sectors: tourism, renewables, food and drink, construction, textiles, manufacturing and the creative sector; as well as social enterprises and the third sector. The team will develop closer links to advisers, including Scottish Enterprise, working in the areas of Innovation and internationalisation through joint events, local surgeries and referrals to ensure that the businesses in our region have the opportunity to be at the leading edge when it comes to product and service development.

3. New Local Services

In addition to the national core services outlined above, new 'Local Services' have been designed and delivered to complement the core services delivery to enable the Business Gateway service in the Scottish Borders to:

- Respond quickly to any significant changes in the local economy
- Respond quickly and appropriately to changes in the needs of the local business base
- Accurately reflect the pressures felt by local businesses.

These interventions include: Business Gateway advisory support; expert help or specialist support; localised bespoke training workshops; networking events for specific target groups or sectors. In the Scottish Borders, these local services include the following:

- Advisory services (1 to 1) will also be provided to individuals seeking to start up a business within one of the key sectors noted in the Economic Strategy as well as client groups that are recognised as requiring additional support e.g. young people.
- In order to better reflect the nature of the local business base and the objectives to encourage growth, the Business Gateway has extended the national threshold for entry into a "Local" Growth Advisory Service from £200,000 to £100,000 annual turnover growth over three years.
- Workshops and events that provide support in respect of key business issues including: leadership and development, e-commerce, social media, marketing, financial management, Tax and HR.
- Provision of proactive support and advice to stimulate new enterprise in areas identified by the CPP as the most disadvantaged, especially Burnfoot in Hawick and Langlee in Galashiels.
- Provision of specialist advice to growth potential business across issues such as resource efficiency, energy audits and action plans, ICT strategy and implementation, business strategy and organisational development.
- Introduction of a series of Masterclasses which will be made available across the region. The plan is to pilot a series of 5 events in the period to the end of September 2015, if successful these will then be rolled out in future years. The Masterclasses will take the form of a strong business speaker on relevant subject and then a structured networking event for the attendees run by Business Gateway.

Business Gateway

Business Plan 2015/16

This local service element is being funded through two European funded projects that are linked to the delivery of local Business Gateway services in the Scottish Borders, which continue into 2014/15:

- Business Gateway Plus – additional one-to-one services, e-business skills workshops, additional start-up and follow-up support, survival and growth support. This amounts to an additional £210,000 in the period to September 2015.
- South of Scotland Business Competitiveness Project – additional support for tourism, food and drink, and renewables sectors, valued at £108,000 until September 2015.

Both of these programmes were extended during 2014 until September 2015 allowing this additional support to continue.

Scottish Borders Council submitted an application, in early March 2015, for the next round of ERDF funding running from September 2015 until December 2020. The focus of this application is the provision of more businesses services targeting businesses with growth potential and aims to provide greater breadth of activities (working with more businesses) and depth (working more with individual businesses) through the new client management process. At the time of writing the Council is awaiting feedback from the Scottish Government on the proposal which would secure £1.05m of extra funding.

4b) Improvement Plan: Developing Best Practice and Local Added Value

The delivery of Business Gateway services does not happen in isolation. In addition to close working with other Council departments, Business Gateway has developed and is seeking develop strong working relationships with a range of partners and stakeholders to provide the best possible enterprise support for local businesses. It works with:

- Scottish Enterprise;
- Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce;
- The Federation of Small Businesses;
- Intermediaries such as accountants, lawyers and bank managers; and
- The Scottish Borders Exporters Association.
- Skills Development Scotland
- Scottish Business in the Community
- Resource Efficiency Scotland

These partners provide a range of services that complement those of the Business Gateway, but are also a route to clients that would benefit from support from Business Gateway.

Drawing on experience from other areas of enterprise support delivery across Scotland and the UK the Council and Business Gateway team continue to look at ways of improving the service provided to clients and the impacts it has on the local economy.

The advisers are the main interface with businesses and individuals seeking to start up in business. The team are structured so that advisers are, where possible, focused on a specific segment or a key sector. There is, currently, a team of 9 advisers and each has a part to play in the new client management approach. The team is split as follows:

- 4 advisers (2 fte) working with Business Start Ups;
- 5 advisers (2.8 fte) working with Business Growth;
- 2 advisers supporting Food & Drink, Renewables and Tourism sectors; and
- 4 advisers (2.8 fte) providing specialist support in the areas of e-commerce, ICT, social enterprise, investment readiness and HR and organisational development.

This targeted approach will ensure that advisers can focus on delivery and achievement of national start up and particularly growth targets.

The team is key to the success of the service and investment in adviser training and continuing professional development (CPD) is absolutely critical, each adviser has been tasked with completing a CPD diary and targeted to achieve a minimum of 5 hours per month (full time).

Last year 3 advisers completed the Premier Adviser accreditation and 3 others gained a BA in Business and Enterprise, all passing with distinction.

Planned and current training and development activities include:

- Team meetings are held every 2 weeks and at each meeting a section is given over to a guest speaker with the aim of updating the team on current business practices or partner activity
- In addition where workshops are held for clients the staff are invited to attend where this is relevant for example on subjects like Auto Enrolment which is a crucial business change that advisers need to be aware of.
- Formal training and personal development plans, advisers are able to apply for support for more formal training. One adviser is currently being supported to undertake an MSc in

Business Gateway

Business Plan 2015/16

Business Information Systems and Technologies, which will help in delivering ICT/e-commerce advice to businesses

- Personal networking/attendance at industry events;
- Attendance at the Masterclass talks and networking opportunities
- Shadowing of peers - be that listening to calls, attending meetings or site visits;
- Best practise visits to other areas/service deliverers to broaden perspective;
- Case conference approach to client development – i.e. active involvement of wider adviser team and management in developing growth action plans/ agreeing best approach for delivery of client support – encourages sharing of ideas, previous experience and/or sector specialism;
- Monthly structured CPD and Performance Review and Development activity.
- Regular mutual identification of training needs (where the manager and adviser jointly identify the adviser's strengths and weaknesses) and they agree what needs to be done, when and how.

Specific measures to address and improve performance are outlined in Section 5.

5. BUSINESS GATEWAY PERFORMANCE AND TARGETS 2015/16

5a) Business Gateway Performance and Targets 2014/15

The table below provides a summary of Business Gateway performance for 2013/14 and the targets for 2015/16, which Scottish Borders Council has agreed with the Business Gateway National Team at COSLA will be delivered.

Service Output Targets			
Start-up Advisory Service	Target 2014/15	Actual 2014/15	Target 2015/16
Total number of start-up customers who have begun trading	220	225	220
Number of higher value start-up customers with agreed actions identified in Action Plan for Growth	20	17	25
Number of higher value start-up customers with completed Action Plans for Growth	8	10	10
Number of start-up workshops/seminars held	72	84	72
Number of customers attending start-up workshops/seminars	360	533	360
Growth Advisory Services for start-up and existing businesses			
Number of growth customers with agreed actions identified on their Action Plan for Growth	20	21	20
Number of growth customers accepted into growth pipeline relationship with SE	10	8	10
Number of growth customers accepted into account management relationship with SE	2	3	2
Number of growing business workshops/seminars held	10	13	25
Number of clients attending growing business workshops/seminars	40	166	125
BG Local Services			
Number of customers accessing local advisory services	400	670	400
Number of growth customers accepted into Local Growth Advisory Service ⁵	45	41	45
Number of customers accessing local expert help services	30	9	30
Number of workshops/seminars held	72	71	50
Number of customers attending workshops/seminars	360	445	250

⁵ This is a local target for businesses with growth potential of £100,000 to £199,000 over three years and new for 2014/15; it is not included in national reports

There are a number of issues to comment on in respect of performance during 2014/15 as follows that are reflected in the Business Plan and Improvement Plan priorities:

- Business start-up numbers and local services are greater than expected and this reflects demand from local businesses and the use of EU funding to extend the activities beyond the core national Business Gateway service offering;
- The growth targets for 2014/15 were overly optimistic and ambitious; the structure of the business base in the Scottish Borders makes it difficult to attain the nationally set growth criteria and highlights the need to develop and deliver a local service that meets the needs of businesses with growth potential in the Scottish Borders;
- In respect of Expert Help, the uptake from businesses was slower than anticipated. However, there are currently an additional 13 projects underway and these will be noted in the 2015/16 figures.
- The proposed targets for 2015/16 continue to place an emphasis on support for local businesses with growth potential and delivering services that meet local priorities. These are stretching but realistic targets that will contribute to the growth of the local economy.

A Business Gateway Manager was appointed in October 2014 allowing a greater focus on day to day management and achievement of targets as well as other priorities. This appointment resulted in a major pick up in the team's outputs during the second half of 2014/15 and has created a stronger position for the team going into 2015/16.

Workshops

At this point, it is worth explaining the targets and highlighting a change in the workshop activity for the forthcoming year. Currently, Business Start-Up workshops are run at a minimum of 4 per month. These workshops are delivered in locations across the region as well as evenings and at weekends to ensure access for anyone interested in attending.

After a review it has been decided to change the recording of Growing Business workshops to include all those that are delivered by the in-house team of advisers. This means that Business Gateway will count a number of the ICT/e-commerce workshops and our Marketing Your Business workshops as Growing Business workshops where previously these were recorded under local services> This is an historic anomaly from prior to the service being brought in-house. This result in the mix of workshops reported changing but no reduction in the actual number delivered.

Finally, the BG Local Services workshops are those that have been developed to meet local needs and priorities and are funded through EU monies and this year will include the Masterclass series. The target for 2015/16 assumes that new EU funding will be available from October and there will not be a break in the service provision.

5b) Continuing Performance Improvement 2015/16

The focus for the team in the coming year is to ensure that the service is reaching the maximum number of businesses possible. This means taking the service out across the region in a structured and well marketed series of campaigns and adviser sessions. As noted earlier the team seek to engage with traditionally harder to reach communities and ensure that the service

Business Gateway

Business Plan 2015/16

is as accessible as possible. These actions will help ensure that the service is delivered to those that need it and core targets are delivered.

The client management approach will allow advisers the time required to work with relevant businesses and help the business achieve its growth targets. The team will have a new focus on High Value Start-up⁶ clients providing them with a service that will enable a more rapid growth and bring them earlier success and impact in the economy.

Business Gateway will continue with its sector focused specialists and provide support for important elements of business such as HR and Finance. The team will work closely with partners (e.g. Scottish Enterprise) in delivery of Innovation support and during the year review this activity to ensure that it best meets the needs of local businesses.

The team will continue to work with Further and Higher Education Institutions as well as supporting the Young Enterprise Scheme as well as attending careers fairs at schools. This activity will support enterprise education efforts and ensure that self-employment is considered a real alternative to employment.

Continued participation in national network groups enables the service to learn from other areas and also influence future policy in respect of Business Gateway and wider business support activity.

Monthly performance meetings will continue to be held with the Chief Officer Economic Development to ensure close monitoring of local performance progress.

During 2014/15 an internal marketing team was established to coordinate marketing and promotional activities. A marketing plan will be developed to support this business plan that will focus on the key activities throughout the coming year. This marketing team already has close working links with the national marketing team and PR agency. A recent appointment within the Council's Communications team has proved an excellent resource for communicating the Business Gateway message in the region. The Business Gateway Manager also sits on the National Marketing team enabling local input to the national plan.

As previously identified intermediaries such as banks and accountants are an important source of referrals of new clients and add credibility in the service. To date these introductions and this will be addressed during 2015/16 through introducing a monthly newsletter targeted at intermediaries. This newsletter will highlight the activities of the service and the impact on the businesses supported through case studies with the aim of triggering further introductions to their clients.

Risk – a risk workshop was carried out during January and the key risks and mitigations identified are recorded in the Business Gateway Risk Register (attached as Appendix 3).

Low Carbon and Sustainability – Working closely with colleagues in Economic Development Business Gateway aim to encourage uptake in renewable energy and adoption of sustainable business methods.

Historically this has proved to be a difficult area to engage with businesses. To address this Business Gateway and the Economic Development team are surveying the business base to

⁶ High Value Start Up is defined as a business that has a turnover of in excess of £70,000 or takes on an employee within 18 months of commencing trading.

Business Gateway

Business Plan 2015/16

explore how best to engage with businesses, how they want to receive information regarding this subject, the barriers to adoption and how Business Gateway can help them overcome these barriers. The results of the survey will provide the basis for activity during 2015/16. In addition it is possible that Resource Efficiency Scotland may advisers operating across Scotland and Business Gateway will look to work closely with the team and if possible accommodate one of these advisers in its office to keep the subject high on the agenda of advisers and businesses alike.

Equalities Impact Assessment – In preparation for planning activity for the forthcoming year the service completed an Equality Impact Assessment. This exercise highlighted a number of areas where the service needs to be more proactive. This includes meeting with communities and groups that traditionally find it hard to access public services and exploring how this can be made easier.

As noted earlier Business gateway will deliver workshops to specific groups that been identified as not being proactive in accessing the service, as well delivering workshops in key areas such as Burnfoot and Langlee and will take advice as to whether these should be delivered in a language other than English.

6. FINANCE

Scottish Borders Council receives funding to deliver Business Gateway in the Scottish Borders from the Scottish Government.

The in-house delivery costs of Business Gateway are based on the budget available within the Council's five year Financial Plan.

The financial projections are attached below in Section 7.

Business Gateway

Business Plan 2015/16

7. Financial Plan 2014 - 2017

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	12 months	12 months	6 months
	£	£	£
ANNUAL BUDGET	331,088	333,823	168,305
Staff	291,929	294,664	148,726
Property Expenses	17,152	17,152	8,576
Transport Expenses	12,864	12,864	6,432
Supplies & Services	9,143	9,143	4,571
TOTAL	331,088	333,823	168,305

Business Gateway – Performance Improvement Plan – 2015/16

Improvement Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost/Resource	Expected Result
1). Create and deliver a series of 5 Master Class and Networking events across the region, to trial effectiveness for businesses and Business Gateway	BG Manager & BG Advisers	April 2015 – September 2015	Staff Time; Budget of £10k for delivery and marketing from budget	More knowledgeable businesses, an excellent networking opportunity for attendees who will be encouraged to collaborate. Marketing for BG Service and better representation of the service in the rest of the region leading to introduction to new contacts for BG Advisers and achievement of national targets.
2). Identify suitable contact centres and use these for delivery of Business Gateway across the region. Research opportunities to apply branding and provide leaflets and further information. Timetable and market the adviser attendance at these venues	BG Manager and BG Advisers. SBC Contact centre managers	May to September 2015 as initial trial	Staff Time	Greater visibility and reach of Business Gateway. Additional marketing opportunity for service. Provision of easier access of service to more remote parts of the region leading to achievement of national targets in particular start-up.
3). Establish a Client Management system of operation for Growth Advisory Service clients. Identifying businesses with greatest potential and formally allocating them to a client manager.	BG Manager	April 2015	Staff Time	Closer working relationship with our key target market. Quicker identification and provision of solutions for client needs. Leading to a stronger business base in the region who have easier access to the services the public sector can offer. Creation of a more structured operating environment in Business Gateway and again assistance in achieving national targets.
4). Proactive delivery of service and workshops to harder to reach areas and communities in the region. Working with our colleagues in Equality and Diversity to	BG Manager and BG Advisers	May 2015	Staff Time	Provision of a better service from BG, carrying out our wider social responsibilities as part of SBC. Discovering new businesses and

Business Gateway

Business Plan 2015/16

Improvement Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost/Resource	Expected Result
identify prospects				individuals that we should be working with and who will contribute to our national targets.
5). Identify opportunities for businesses to take advantage of the new Borders Railway. Ensure where possible that support is given to those businesses that want to provide a service linked to the railway and that we promote this in our marketing activity.	BG Advisers	Ongoing	Staff time	Borders Railway will bring a range of excellent business opportunities to the region. Businesses are currently slow to change practices or introduce new services until they can gauge the use of the railway. While this is understandable our role will ensure that when they are ready to invest time and money that we are there to discuss and encourage this investment. This will see a greater use of the railway and lead to more successful local businesses
6). Radio Borders advertising for both the service provided by BG but also linked to case studies supporting some of the businesses we work with.	BG Manager and BG Marketing team	May 15 – September 15	Staff Time, Budget of approx. £5k using existing budgets	Increased exposure of BG service and better description of how we can assist businesses in the region. Closer links to Radio Borders leading to greater opportunities for exposure and acceptance of BG related news stories. Leading to a greater number of enquiries for BG services.
7). Provision of a dedicated Broadband line to Business Gateway offices in Selkirk.	BG Manager and SBC IT	May 2015	£250 installation and £25 per month rental	Reduction in IT problems during BG training workshops. Greater service to workshop attendees and reduction in complaints received by workshop deliverers relating to lack of IT access.
8). Introduction of CRM 2 as a recording and data base system for the department	BGNational; PO (Business), BG Manager and roll out	May 2015	Staff time, cost is covered centrally	Reduction in time spent by advisers recording activity. Greater increase in reporting capabilities leading to more

Business Gateway Business Plan 2015/16

Improvement Action	Responsibility	Timeline	Cost/Resource	Expected Result
	team and SBC IT			in-depth information about provision of the service we deliver which in turn will lead to better future planning activity
9). Link with workshop delivery in Dumfries and Galloway to look at provision of additional IT and tax related workshops for businesses	BG Manager	May 2015 to September 2015	£200 per workshop paid from existing budgets	Provision of wider knowledge to businesses and increase the ability to reach new audiences for our workshops and services. Aiming for a minimum of 12 workshops delivered over the period with 60 additional attendees.
10). Research and introduce diagnostic reviews for businesses in Growth Advisory Service and operating in the Client Management system	BG Manager and BG Advisers	October 2015	Staff time. Any additional costs coming from existing budgets	Greater understanding of the businesses we work with and an opportunity to structure the information gained from them. Will lead to a more structured delivery of support, more expansive identification of need and in turn a quicker move through our segmentation model and achievement of national targets.
11). Delivery of Scottish Borders Business month extending the period of focus from Business week in 2014, reacting to feedback taken during that week.	BG Manager and BG Marketing local team	Up to October 2015	Staff time, marketing and delivery costs within a budget of £10k – source to be confirmed	Increased awareness of business in the region and the importance of this to the region. Increased knowledge transfer to business owners by delivery of various workshops. Greater attendance at the workshops as the content is spread over a month rather than focussed on one week. Increased access to business not currently using our service to help achieve our national targets.